

A⁽²¹⁾ A
C A L L

TO THE
SHULAMITE:
OR

To the Scattered and Divided Members
OF THE
CHURCH.

Delibered and Published upon occasion.

By THOMAS TANNER.

Cant. 8. 8, 9.

We have a little Sister, and she hath no Breasts, [not able to bear the discipline of the married Wife] what shall we do for our Sister in the day when she shall be spoken for? If she be a wall [united within her self] we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door [that will admit Us] we will enclose her with boards of Cedar.

L O N D O N,

Printed by Andrew Clark, for Henry Brome, at the Gun
at the West End of St. Pauls, 1674.



To the Honourable,
The Lady **URITH POLE**,

The Virtuous Consort of

Sir **COURTENAY POLE**, Baronet,
Colonel-General of the Eastern Division
of *Devon*, a Member of the Parliament, &c.

MADAM,



Our Ladiship heard this Call of
the Shulamite with a pious
sympathy, and compassion; and
since it took so well with you
in the hearing, the first view of
it is in gratitude returned to
Your Ladiship's hand, and eye, that you may
trie whether it be not the same that it was. And
because this Call did not sound alike to every ear,
but was judged of, as every head was more clear,
or full of pre-possession: and could not reach
to others, to whom it was more especially intended,
but by the Eccho's of a sinister report: I must con-
fess I was not hard to be induced upon some per-
wasion,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

swasion, to let it go unto the Press, that I might have a few Copies to distribute among some of these (in hope that their apprehensions might be some wayes rectified, or reduced by them) without any further trouble to my self. So praying to Your Ladiship an entrease of all the blessings of this life; and at last, that full of years, and good works (which are your only studies) You may sweetly drop into a better; being that, that You do infinitely more desire. I humbly beg Your Ladiship's pardon, and protection too,

MADAM,

Your very humble and obliged Servant,

Tho. Tanner.

A CALL

TO THE

SHULAMITE.

Cant. 6. 13.

*Return, return, ô Shulamite, return, return,
that we may look upon thee : what shall ye see
in the Shulamite ? as it were the company of
two armies.*



ET us take that for granted, which will hardly be denied us on any hand (or if it be, the majority of Interpreters will over-rule it) that this Song of Excellency setteth forth the passionate desires of the Church after Christ, and the most affectionate returns of Christ himself towards Her. But in the words which I have read, he doth not only shew his own affection in his Call after the wandering *Shulamite*, but that of his Body too, which is the same Christ mystical ; saying, *Return, return, that we may look upon thee*, plainly intimating that there is more than one in this Call : And no one will deny, or doubt, but that the ingeminating of the words doth expresse the greater ardour and elegance of intention. Wherefore for the better opening of the words, let us 1. consider the Call, what it is, *viz.* to *return*, 2. The Person called, who she is, *viz.* the *Shulamite*. 3. The

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End, *that we may look upon thee.* 4. The Answer of the *Shulamite* : *what wilt ye see in the Shulamite* ? 5. The Rejoinder : *as it were the company of two armies.*

First, for the Call what it is ; It is to *return*, implying that the *Shulamite* was some time before in the right way, if she had but held it : Else it had been rather said, *Come hither, come hither, ô Shulamite* : but it is, *Return, return* : she had left the way that before she was engaged in : And the ingemination in the Call seemeth to import, that since she went off, she occasioned much trouble to the Church, and as much inconveniency to her self ; so that the saving of more trouble to the Church was a just motive to make her call out unto the *Shulamite* ; and the compassion of her made it more intense and earnest : for the Church loved the *Shulamite*, and wished her well-doing, even as her own.

Secondly, for the person called therefore, and called the *Shulamite*, who or what was she ? some understand her to be the Church of the Gentiles, called upon by the Synagogue, or Church of the Jews to return, that is, to joyn her self to the Jewish Congregation, and to worship with her : but as we hinted before, *Return* signifies, that the *Shulamite* was once in the right way ; which could not be said of the Gentiles in the time of *Solomon*, if at any time before. Others therefore take the *Shulamite* to be the beloved wife of *Solomon*, and that her name doth seem to be framed out of his, for the more ingratiating of *Shelomoh* with *Shulamith*, and *Shulamith* with *Shelomoh*, (as if he had called her the *Shelomoh*, but one entirely with my self.) This *Shulamite* is therefore thought to be the Daughter of *Pharaoh*, who to gain the greater power with her Husband, became Profelyte to the Jewish Church ; but being her self unstedfast in the Covenant, proved an occasion to draw away the heart of *Solomon* to worship in the High places, wherewith the Lord was offended. Thus we find in Scripture, that from divers literal and historical hints of passages many things purely spiritual, and mystical, have been extended to a more general, and universal intention, and so conveyed to the Church : which we see almost in all the types relating to our Saviour Christ, as they are exhibited and exemplified

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emplified in the New Testament. Let the *Shulamite* (then) be the diverted Profelyte, once a Member of the true Church; and let this voice, *Return, return*, be either that of *Solomon*, converted from his own error, and now calling upon the *Shulamite* (in the name of Christ) and longing to reclaim her; Or that of the Daughters of *Jerusalem* (in the name of the true Church) longing also to regain her. *Return, return, ô Shulamite*, from thy High-places, and from thy divers Worshipps, according to thine own inventions, and readjoyn thy self to us, *Return, return*.

Thirdly, To this end, *That we may look upon thee* : that is, that we may both contemplate and admire thy taking beauty, and enjoy it as our own, even as we did before. *Return, ô Shulamite, return*; we acknowledg the splendor of thy virtues; oh that they were ours once again! we adore thy piety; oh that it were well informed! we admire the variety of thy gifts and graces, which are thy rare embellishments; oh that thou mayest not have received them to thine own, and our prejudice! *Return, ô Shulamite, return*, that we may look upon thee in such a manner as we earnestly desire, *viz.* as our own entirely, without division.

Fourthly, Then we have the Answer of the *Shulamite* : what shall ye see in the *Shulamite*? It seems to be a kind of shy and coy answer, cast (as it were) with half a look; as if she had said, I know well enough that you do but compliment and flatter with me; you have no such opinion of my accomplishments and beauties as you pretend, nor any such desire of my company; why should you dissemble so? for what can you see in the *Shulamite* that can be taking unto you, that are of another way, and fancy other looks than such as the *Shulamites*? Some do joyn the latter part to this: *as it were the company of two armies, viz.* that are jealous of one another: (*q. d.*) If I should return again to you, we should never be satisfied one in the other, we should be alwaies at debate and ready to break out into battels: Better asunder as we are!

Fifthly, But I take these last words, as the Rejoynder of the true Church, or daughters of *Jerusalem* replying again to the *Shulamite*; If thou wilt but return unto us, we shall be strong,

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strong, *as it were the company of two armies* against a common enemy : or we shall make a beauteous or a splendid shew, even as one Army drawn up into two Divisions, when the Prince is to pass thorough them in triumphant manner, as is used after Victory. *Return, return* therefore, *ô Shulamite, return, return*, that we may behold thy beauty, enjoy thy love, and joyn thy strength and thine array to ours, and we shall be both happy.

The result of the words, thus opened, is only this.

Doct.

That the true Church doth earnestly desire the return of her scattered and divided Members.

Judg. 5. &c.

When God had stirred up his people to unite and joyn themselves from all parts against the Canaanites, is there not mention made of *Ephraim*, and *Benjamin*, and *Zebulun*, and *Issachar*, and *Nephtali*, that assembled? But is it not also said, *for the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts or impressions of heart; for the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart*; that is, much trouble and sorrow, much enquiring what the reason should be, that *Reuben* should so divide it self from the body of the Holy People? *And why should Gilead abide beyond Jordan, and Dan remain in ships? why should Asher continue in his Ports or Creeks?*

Jer. 2. 3. 5.

When the ten Tribes did rend themselves from the obedience of the Sons of *David*, and from the Worship of the true Temple, built by *Solomon* according unto God's appointment, do we not read of such complaints as these? *Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and what iniquity, saith the Lord, have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? O Israel return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take unto you words, and return unto the Lord.*

Hos. 14. 1. &c.

Jer. 23. 3. 4.

And is not this the great Promise to support the spirits of the true Worshipers? *I will gather my Plock; I will set up shepherds over them. Because ye are all become dross, behold I will therefore gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.* And abundance of such other Prophecies, which may be more close and pertinent, is to be left to your observations, when you read the holy Scriptures.

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To come to the times of the New Testament, when there were divisions in the Church of Corinth, doth not Paul protest after this manner. *I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.* To the Church of the Galatians thus: *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him, that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel; which is not another, but that there be some that trouble you. O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?* To the Ephesians thus: *I the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; for there is one Body, and one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, &c.* To the Philippians thus: *If there be any consolation in Christ fulfil my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let as many as be perfect be thus minded, and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto them. Nevertheless whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.* It might but seem superfluous to run through the rest of the Epistles, which are all full of the like expressions.

1 Cor. 1. 10. &c.

Gal. 1. 6, 7.

To Gal. 3. 1]

Eph. 4. 1, &c.

Phil. 2. 1. &c.

Phil. 3. 15, 16.

To proceed to the times succeeding the Apostles, while yet the Church was under persecution. About the year of our Lord 199. Because the *Eastern* Churches held resolutely to the observation of the Feast of *Easter*, at the same time that the Jews kept the Passover; which the *Western* Christians were offended at, not because they doubted whether the Feast should be celebrated in memory of our Saviours resurrection (which it seems had been alwaies used, without any interruption from the times of the Apostles) but because they thought it not convenient to have this day kept on any other than that when our Saviour rose; whereas if they had observed the falling of the 14th Moon, they should not only have gratified the Jews, but might have happened to observe the wrong time: And we do not doubt but the *Western* Christians were in the right: But because the *Eastern* Churches were resolute in their own

Esseb. l. 5.
cap. 26.

way, one *Victor*, Bishop at that time of *Rome* (who was eminent on this side of the world, in as much as *Rome* was the Imperial City, and the number and quality of Christians there, was predominant) took upon him to sever from the union of Communion all the *Eastern* Churches which adhered to the other Custom : Behold the first print of the foot of *Antichrist*! here was a beginning of erecting a false Church, excommunicating for an opinion, or for a practice, which was indifferent, or at least not inconsistent with the peace of Christians; excommunicating not only one person, or a few particulars, but whole Churches at a blow; yea, all Churches, though they were on this side, and of the same Communion, if they would not joyn in the same wrong; for which fact the said *Victor* was sharply (then) reproved by *Irenæus* Bishop of *Lyons* in *France* (and a better man than he) where there was also a numerous and a noble Church of *Western* Christians. It is the false Church therefore which is for scattering and dividing, whereas the true Church is for gathering and uniting as much as may be; And although the Church of *Rome* did afterwards resume some policy, or prudence, under other Bishops, inclining to a shew of moderation; yet the breach, as only skinned over, hath broken out again, and lasteth unto this day, and will last for ever, till *Rome* return to be what it was before this breach of unity and charity : upon her therefore we justly lay the impeachment of the first great Schism that ever was, wherein she still persisteth, thinking by her power to bear all other Churches down, while she assumeth to her self the name of *Catholick*, and imposeth on the rest the name of *Schismatics*.

Again about the year of our Lord 254. when the Persecution under *Decius* waxed hot, many poor souls staggered by reason of the peril, and were forced by fear to comply somewhat with the Heathen Sacrificers, which much afflicted them in their consciences; and they afterwards most humbly sought the peace of the Church, and to be restored to her Communion. But one *Novatus* a Presbyter opposed their restitution, and upon the question raised a division in the Church, and after that, pretending unto more purity, erected another Church

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Church (if such a pretension may be but so named) in opposition to the General Assembly, calling themselves the Church of Martyrs. So did he seek to scatter or divide those poor Members, which the Church would have gathered and set in joyn by repentance and confession, and such holy discipline as was necessary both to comfort them in respect of the time past, and to confirm them for the time to come : and many of these that were thus restored became afterwards constant even unto the death. It was to be known therefore by the point of charity, if there were no other evidence, which was the true Church ; and the other hath left to this day (by the special providence of God) the mark of heresie and schism upon it self, which is never to be obliterated.

Once again, and so to surcease from further instances : About the year of our Lord 356. towards the latter end of the reign of *Constantine* (the Persecution having long ceased, for his Reign was long) there arose one *Donatus*, who wrote somewhat after the copy of *Novatus* and the *Arians*, supplying the rest by occasion, interest, the humour of the *Africans*, and his own ambition : He condemned other Churches as impure, rebaptized such as joyned unto him, and entitled salvation unto them alone : And these have also left the like mark and brand upon their followers for ever.

Let the Sects of latter times, whose names I spare, repute amongst themselves, or give account to the world (if they think fit) what their judgment is concerning these Parties, or those Churches ; or what they think concerning this Antiquity whereof we speak, which is of the first and best times (if there be any to be approved in their sense) or concerning the posterity that is to come, what they think, or what these would have them judge (or whether they make any matter of it) about themselves.

I have done with the in-artificial arguments (that are so called) which yet should be the strongest, by reason of such authority, whereon they do rely ; but that power and authority may not be divided from one another, which those that are given to division do affect ; and that you may the better hold my method (whilst I my self do not shew to affect dividing

viding from the common way) I proceed to the reasons of the point. If you would know why the true Church doth so earnestly desire the return of her scattered and divided Members : some of her reasons are these that follow.

Reas. 1.

1 Tim. 4. 15.

The first is the unity of the spirit, that doth inspire the whole body, enforcing unto unity, love, and sympathy (mutually and reciprocally) in all the Members. This unity of the spirit is the great and earnest desire that is put into the hearts of all Saints in their conversion to save themselves and others, and to edifie one another in their most holy faith. Now because there is but one way to save our selves, and the same is the way to save others also; this maketh the desire of the Church the more intense to gather, and to bind unto it self all that do belong unto the election of grace : To enlighten them that are yet in darkness, to confirm the weak, to stir up them that faint, and are like to yield to weariness, and to reduce them that go astray ; for there is but one Lord, one Faith, one Hope, one Baptism, and one Truth. The way to save our selves is to walk in this Unity by one and the same spirit ; so that we come to save others by the same Acts whereby we save our selves ; and by the Communion of the body come to receive those benefits which we could not attain unto by a solitary faith, or private life. Wherefore the desires of the Church for unity cannot but be intense and earnest, being thus conversant about the common salvation, which is much endangered and disturbed by division ; in so much that even they that are in the right way can scarcely be saved, by reason of the breaches, impairments and decays of piety, which the others make.

Now true it is, that this one spirit, which is given unto all that do believe, is distributed amongst them according to variety of gifts and measures ; but the same that are given unto every one to profit himself, the same are also given unto him to edifie another ; whether they be gifts of knowledge, or gifts of grace (as they use to distinguish the gifts of sanctity from any other kind) *God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith, and we are every one members one of another, having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, according to the*

Ro. 12. 3. &c.

the proportion of faith. And, the manifestation of the spirit is given unto every man to profit withal : There are diversities &c. of gifts; but the same spirit : God hath so tempered the body together, that one member shall have need of another, that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And again it is said, that there are divers gifts given for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto perfect men, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joyned supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh encrease of the body unto the edifying of it self in love. From which, and many other passages in the writings of this Apostle, that which we have said may seem to be abundantly proved; and many other things might be inferred, and applied, fit to be seriously considered, and layed to heart : as viz. That the gifts and graces of private men are not only profitable, but necessary to the Church, as well as those of her Ministers, or Elders; and that the measures of faith, and hope, and love, and zeal are distributed unto every one, according to the exigency of the Church, the Body, which is the fulness of Christ; and that by such graces we are more strongly joyned unto one another, than by any other gifts, though they be of miracles; That one Member cannot want another, or divide it self from the Body, but that a rent and schism will follow in the Body; not without great sin and mischief; for such a rent is a sin against the Head, dividing the unity of the spirit; against the body, hindring of its growth wounding it with pain, maiming it with impotency, depriving it of perfection : against particular members, in that it doth with-draw that measure whereby another member should have been supplied, and doth drain and divert the fulness of Christ; against a mans own soul, in that as a branch cut off from the Vine, he must needs become dry, cease to be fruitful, and grow worse and worse, till he return back to be anew

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anew engrafted. In a word, if one man cannot grow in Christ, whilst another is at a stand, or doth decay and wither; and the very juice and chyle that doth administer unto growing be speaking of the same truth; and the only way of digesting this truth, *to making encrease of the body*, be the *edifying of it self in love*: We may easily perceive how this unity of the spirit doth constrain the Church, if it be possible, to maintain the unity of her Body; for she cannot keep the unity of spirit without it; but if she cannot possibly do so, then earnestly to desire and endeavour the return of her scattered and divided Members.

Now to say the truth, the dissenting Brethren have been alwaies sensible of the weight of this argument, and to break the force, or rebate the edge of it, they pretend divers matters (as it were for their excuse, since it cannot be denied but we were first a Church, or else they could not have derived from Us, as they do; and that we were the first in possession of the faith) as *viz.* 1. That they agree with Us in the unity of faith, believing the same Doctrine of salvation. 2. In the unity of the spirit, having the same desires about the saving of themselves and others. 3. In the bond of charity, as we are all members (they say) of the same Catholick Church; and as Protestant Professors, members of one ano her. 4. Then that variety of opinion, and union in the point of charity, are not inconsistent. 5. Nay, that divers Order, Discipline, and Communion need not break the bond of charity, unless by accident of mens corruptions; which if they should be observed and humoured, the Gospel it self could never have been preached; for our Lord foretold, that it would be an occasion of division. 6. And for schism rightly understood, that they look upon it as an heinous sin, even as we do. In which several pretences, as they give us little cause of satisfaction; so they give us a just and necessary occasion of returning somewhat more than is like to sort to their favour.

We must confess; that when the Church is so divided, that in the judgment of charity, many godly persons do divide themselves from the body; and in the judgment of the Church,
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many men of eminent gifts and graces (that were known to be such whilst they remained in her communion) do desert her communion, it cannot but prove an inexplicable inconvenience both to the Church and Them: for if all believe and teach the same Doctrine of Salvation, whence ariseth so much caution whom we hear? such exceptions, heats, and scruples? If we do not all believe the same Doctrine, as it is to be doubted that we do not, for as much as there seemeth not only to be a divers scope and drift in the pressing of many points of importance, but that we fear our dissenting Brethren do not close with Us in one of the 12 articles of the Apostles Creed (though some of them do not scruple at standing up when the whole is rehearsed in our Churches) *viz. I believe the Holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints*, putting such a construction upon it as is far from the consent not onely of our Church, but of all Ages, as we conceive: I say, how can we then *grow up together into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body is filly joyn'd together unto one encrease?* If they could hold still the same charity inviolable, without the same Order, Discipline, and Communion (as others do pretend) whence should arise such animosities and contentions? It cannot be altogether from mens corruptions, as at the first propagation of the Gospel: but if it do arise partly from the corruptions, frailties, and partialities of such as break without necessity, partly from the passions of such as are offended justly (as we conceive, howsoever unjust or extravagant they may be, when they are provoked.) let them joyn the whole verse together; *It is necessary that offences come, but woe be to them by whom they come.* But, as we conceive, the nature of the thing it self doth necessarily infer a breach of charity (suppose men more good or perfect than either They or We can find, or our Ancestors before us, or the Posterity to come) for it cannot be, that there should be two Communions, wherein it is supposed to be unlawful for one to joyn with another, but that one Party to the other must needs be as the *Jew* or the *Samaritan*. But if it be granted, that these two parties cannot possibly have perfect charity with one another (which if the nature of the thing did not hinder, the

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the just judgements of God, by reason of the violation of his own Ordinance would do it; then it must needs follow, that the *body cannot edifie it self in love*: and so the Church must needs retain an earnest desire to be restored to its best estate, when it was in Union: for though we may remain (possibly) Members of the Catholick Church still, yet because we doubt of our consent in the Catholick Faith, we cannot be united, nor joyn in perfect charity; and though we be all *Protestants*, and so members of one another, we can take no greater benefit or priviledg thereby, than *English* men, when they are in civil wars with one another.

To deal ingeniously this is the charity of the Church; she looketh upon such good men (whom in charity we way esteem so, in some measure) as do divide and separate from Us, and such as they may draw with them, to belong to the body still; not only of the Catholick Church, but of such particular Churches from which they do recede, or within whose Precincts they may chance to fall: Therefore she is not rash to excommunicate them, but useth all her care, and power, and tenderness to reclaim and to reduce them, having arms ever open to embrace them, and to restore them to her peace, and to indulge them in what she may, to oblige them the faster to her self. So far are we from looking upon them as other Churches, or that their schisms can make them such; or as free from our charge, though they renounce Us; or as fallen from the hope of the Gospel, with all their followers, into an inevitable state of damnation, though we cannot reduce them (as the Papists judge of Us) that we own, even these, as a part of the Church of *England* against their wills, and are ever ready to regain their good will, and to reduce them to a better state: for, though we speak it soft, and mildly, we do judg indeed, that these do much interrupt and disturb, the way of salvation to themselves and others, and do much impeach and prejudice those amongst our selves, who before did run well; and would yet proceed to do so, if they did not object their rubbs and impediments in the way.

We answer further, that whereas it is truly said, [*Opiniorum varietas, & opinantium unitas non sunt adversata*;] Variety

ty of opinions, and unity of Opinions are not inconsistent ; Our Church alloweth a greater latitude in this kind, than any of those that do pretend a latitude, only to palliate their own restraints : for amongst them, if one be for Lay-Elders, and another against it ; one for the power of Pastors, another for the power of the People ; one for laying on of hands after baptism, and another against it ; nay, one for free-will, and another for free-grace : and so in certain lesser questions, it hath been found enough to divide and sub-divide them into Parties, Churches, feuds, and animosities ; whereas in our Church great variety of opinions may, and do consist very well with the Unity of the Church : Every Scholar knows how ingenious men do abound in their own senses, even in the Schools : and it is not at all to the prejudice of the Church, but may be rather to her benefit, that certain points be not carried (otherwise) in extremes, but that there may be here a little and there a little, and one to ballance with another. But when this rule of variety or diversity of opinion is traduced to a contrariety of establishment, they must give us leave to assume that such a diversity is utterly inconsistent with the Unity of the Church. In vain therefore do they declaim in general against schism, as much as we could wish, being sensible of what *Pamelius* hath delivered, *viz.* that the name of schism hath been alwaies ignominious in the Church, and on all hands condemned, whilst they defend in particular all the Sects at this day (besides the Quakers) to be true particular Churches, that a man may safely joyn with any of them, so do better, that separation is no schism ; that the Church which imposeth (though it be but things indifferent) is the schismatical Church, if it will not vary from her orders, for the satisfaction of the weak, or scrupulous : and that in such cases the schismatical Churches (which are so called) are the truer and purer Churches of Christ, and have all Church power within themselves, to all intents and purposes : for where can we now find a Schism which is culpable ? or a Church which can stand, if she must vary from her order upon all demands ? or any possibility either of a Church or of a Schism ? By all which it seems that some of our dissenting Brethren do misdoubt them-

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selves,

Schismatis nomen in Ecclesia semper ignominiosum, publicè, damnatum: In Terr. de præscript. adv. Hæret.

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selves as lyable unto this charge of schism, and would either cloak it neatly, if they could, or if it come to the worst, defend that schism is no such sin, as they sometimes granted; and that they may lawfully live in schism, especially when their maintenance ariseth that way (as some have put themselves upon that exegency, and so are bound to maintain that which maintaineth them, framing their lives and doctrines according to their interests.) Not to grate any further upon that point, wherein they are so tender; there remaineth yet another word about the Unity of the Spirit, that they have the same desires (if not more intense and earnest than we our selves) for the good of souls, for the saving of themselves and others: We do not doubt but that there is a zeal of God amongst many of them, though not according unto a right knowledge; not because they are more weak or ignorant than We, but only otherwise perswaded or inclined (howsoever it hath happened to them.) We trust that many of them do sincerely mean as they profess: And so far as this is true, we acknowledge the working of one and the same spirit in them and Us: We look upon them as a part of the body, and wherein they are not only not against Us, but for Us, that they are so far One with us. But then, if they do really believe that we have the same spirit amongst us (or some of us at least) why should they so magnifie the same spirit in themselves above the same in Us? as if there were not the same power and purity of the spirit amongst Us to conveigh grace unto the hearers, or to make them perfect that do come unto Us? which Query we have the more reason to put home to our Brethren, since they may seem (now) to cease from their instance upon the work of conversion (a gift which they thought almost singular to themselves before) as a thing below their Auditories; or to preach against prophaneness (wherein they were once the Boanerges's of the Age) seeing their followers must be taken for no such; and, it may be, cannot well bear it; so that all their writings of late (which are the reports of their Preachments to such as cannot hear them) do run in a new strain, which is much different from that way, which they did admire and applaud before. Again, if they do

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do acknowledg such an Unity of Spirit with Us, how can they think or pretend (as they do) to be compleat without Us, and to have no need of Us? how happeneth it that they do so little weigh what the Apostle saith, that *one member hath need of another? And if the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: Nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. That there should be no schism in the body, but the members should have the same care one for another.* 1 Cor. 12. 15. &c.

But if these members separate from the body, can each member which is separated subsist by it self? or any few that joyn together, presently constitute themselves an entire Body, a complete Church? Or can any of their Officers, which was but as an hand or a foot before make it self an heart or an head in a New Church, and think that in truth they are such, if they be not altogether useles? which cannot but put us in mind of *Jotham's Parable*, and though we shall abstain from applying the prickles of it to our Brethren, yet we doubt that it is this ambition of some hand, or foot, or other, which thinks it self worthy of a better place, that is one of the sad occasions of such dismembring. But when they have dismembred and divided to the utmost, let others observe that the use whereof they are (if they be of any good use) is but the same, of which they were before in their proper places; and being distorted to the places, which they usurp, they do but move like members out of joyn, and will soon be impaired for want of the body, notwithstanding their pretences to completeness among themselves. And we could shew of how little use men of eminent gifts and parts before have been for many years, since they left their stations in the Church; the leaving of us (as we conceive) occasioning the dereliction of the spirit unto them; so that they are left to themselves in matters of great concern to their own good, and the good of others. Judg. 9. 15.

But I will conclude my answer, and this first reason, with applying of a passage of St. *Augustine* upon that place; *Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard that Antichrist* 1 Joh. 2. 18. &c.

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shall come, even now are there many Antichrists. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. Non possunt exire foras nisi Antichristi, &c. None, saith he, can go out of the Church but Antichrists: They which are not contrary unto Christ cannot go forth; for he which is not contrary unto him doth abide in his Body, and is accounted a member. Whosoever do not abide with us, but do go out, it is manifest that they are Antichrists: And how is that to be proved? by their lye: Who is a lyer, but he that denieth that *Jesus* is the *Christ*? Let us ask the several Hereticks of our times; what Heretick do you find that denieth *Jesus* to be the *Christ*? Some (as he proceedeth) are gone out from us, and are become Donatists: Let us ask them whether *Jesus* be the *Christ*, they presently confels that *Jesus* is the *Christ*. If therefore he be the Antichrist that denieth *Jesus* to be the *Christ*: neither can they call Us Antichrists, nor We them, because we both confels the same. Wherefore, if neither call one another Antichrist, we are not gone out from one another, we remain in Unity. But if we remain in unity; [*Quid faciunt in hac civitate duo altaria?*] What mean two divers Churches in this City? [*Quid faciunt divisa domus?*] What means the scattering of houses? [*divisa conjugia?*] husband and wife going two waies? [*Quid facit communis lectus & divinus Christus?*] What meaneth this, that husband and wife are one in all but

Vult nos fateri quod verum est. An ipsi a nobis exierunt, an nos ab ipsis? sed absit, ut nos ab ipsis: Habemus enim testamentum dominica hereditatis: Dabo tibi gentes hereditatem tuam: Quisquis huic hereditati non communicat, foras eun.

Christ? saith he, we must confels the truth. Are they gone out from Us, or We from them? God forbid that it should be We from them; for We have the Testament of the Lords Inheritance, saying, *I will give thee the Nations for thine Inheritance*: whosoever doth not communicate with this Inheritance, he is gone forth, and in fact and deed he is against Christ, though in word he do confels him. Such as act preposterously for Christ, and for the Cause of Christ, do but hinder where they make a shew to help, and pull down where they seem to build, or at least build that which must be pulled down again, although they may possibly work with

with a good intention. But under this pretext there are many that do act from a different temper ; which is one thing that our Brethren will be loth to bear ; and therefore I will compound with them for some abatement, that they may hear my next reason with the more patience.

The true Church doth earnestly desire the return of her Reas. 2.
scattered and divided Members, by reason of her sense of pain, and loss, through such dissipation or division : she doth not feel, nor yet concept herself to be compleat without them, but rather maimed and deprived.

The Physical Philosopher saith, that *dolor est solutio continui*, pain is the solution or division of that which was entire : As if it be a wound or rent, the parts are dissterned from one another ; if it be a bruise, the circling of the blood and spirits are interrupted : from which ensueth an ach or a stinging in the parts affected, or in the whole body, which is called pain. The Members of the Church may be divided, either by a bruise, or a wound, or a dislocation, or in a word by dismembriug ; in each of which degrees the Church doth suffer a divers pain or loss. It is a bruise, when heresies are broached, which tend to division : It is a wound when a breach is made thereby. It is a dislocation, when the Church comes by this means to lose her influence, so that she cannot move her limbs. It is a dismembriug, when the part unsound is either cut off by censure, or cutteth of its self by rashness. Because I cannot touch upon all the cases, there is a threefold pain, and a threefold loss, which are worthy to be mentioned.

1. There is a pain of inflammation in the Church; when certain Tenents are given out that tend unto a new way, contrary to the constitution or establishment : And though in truth there be no time nor place wherein the enemy doth not cast abroad the wild-fire of heresie and schism ; yet at sometimes the minds of men are more disposed than at others, to receive these sparks, and to kindle in combustion. When the Arrian Heresie first brake forth, there arose every where (saith my Historian) no small tumult ; for then a man might have seen not only the Presidents and chief Rulers of the Churches, inveighing one against another with opprobrious terms,

but

Socr. l. i. c. 6.

but also the lay-multitude severed asunder into two parts, the one favouring the one side, the other favouring the other side; and the case became so hainous, and so shameful, that the Christian Religion came to be derided openly, even in the publick Plays and Shews. And has it not happened thus amongst us, by reason of some factitious Doctrines that have been far and wide dispersed? We allowed a great latitude unto opinion before, according unto every mans sense and conscience; and now we come to tax other points, which tend to division, and do not come within the Verge of that latitude (though the maintainers of them do pretend indeed that they ought to do) We must not doubt to instance in a few particulars instead of all the rest. What could follow but a miserable inflammation, when there were subjects apt to receive such opinions as some of these? *viz.* That our National Church is no true Church, or if it be a Church in any sense, that it is improperly so called: That it hath no power of binding or loosing; That her Members have no obligation to continue in her Communion, but rather to come forth from it, even as out of *Babylon*: That there can be no Communion with Congregations that are so mixed, and which cannot choose but to continue so, whiles they are under such a government: And in fine, that the work of Reformation doth require the subverting of such a Government, and setting up of some other more agreeable (as the parties grieved do conceive) to the word of God; or, if they cannot do that, *edificare imperium in imperio*, to separate from the Church, and exercise among themselves such divers disciplines as the several free people will admit. What a bustle have these opinions made throughout the Land, rending in the Body before they rent from it?

2. There is a pain of convulsion, which is a rending in the bowels of the Church by such as do yet continue in her body, and hold with her Communion, but are ready to gnaw their passage out by their working. Thus it was when some of our Members were taught, as if it were hardly lawful to hear some of our Ministers, at least not to live under their Ministry; to go abroad far and wide to hear; and to communicate only

in some choicer Congregations ; yet abhorring separation, because as then (it may seem) there wanted strength to bring forth those issues which the Teachers did desire, hoping better of the product than the event did shew.

3. Lastly, there is a pain of distraction, which the Church doth suffer, and which hath long continued ; partly whilst the several dividing Members struggled with one another, which should give the law unto the rest ; at least, which should have preeminence ; partly since the Church hath recovered some consistency with a poor subsistence (howsoever envied) through Gods especial grace and mercy (till we do forfeit it again by our miscarriages) in the several Banners that are hung out from divers Forts, refusing to be reduced upon any reasonable terms that can be offered. Which pain is the more grievous to the Church, the Mother of peace, in that she is both forced to contend with her own children, and is also rent by her own bowels of compassion, and fearful of the issue. As when the *Israelites* had vanquished the Tribe of *Judg. 21.* *Benjamin* (which we have not yet done, fearing to proceed unto extremities.) *The people of Israel came to the house of God, and lift up their voices and wept sore, and said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to day one Tribe lacking in Israel?* This alas ! is our complaint at this day ; not a Tribe or two, but they speak as if of twelve we had but two remaining. They speak it may be according to their passions, but we with the pain of compassion added unto this of our distraction, must needs acknowledge and lament the sad diminutions which we have suffered, and do still suffer in our Body, which having lost its Members, can neither go with ease, nor take repose in any posture : And this brings me from the pain of sense to the pain of loss ; to mention also the threefold loss, which the Church sustaineth by these divisions.

1. The first is the loss of power unto edification ; our divisions have plucked up the flood-gates, and made profaneness overflow like a deluge : and behold they say, look what the people are whom we have left ! who could have abode amongst them ? whereas the people was not such before, whilst
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the laws might be executed, and the Discipline of the Church was revered, and the gravity of Ministers was held in some respect! Is not all Religion (or at least the power of it) become contemptible? so that now it is in vain to go about to restrain any mans practice by fear of censure; he doth not value it; or to bind any mans conscience by the power of any sound doctrine: He hath received dissolute principles: He is not to be moved by love or fear. Our divisions have demolished all these, and layed them low; and men do now pretend a binding conscience to commit such sins, as we were bound in conscience to restrain them from, if we were able; for since our divisions have erected that plea of liberty of conscience, men of no conscience have serv'd their ends of it: and if all parties now were to be numbred, the greatest part would be found to be that which is of no party, but to live as they list, without a law, and (I had almost said) without God in the world too. Besides all this; has not Popery had as fair play as it could wish, and so strange an encrease in a short time, as to amaze us now, and strike a real terror, not into vain apprehensions (as they have made use of it, as a scare-crow heretofore) but into the soberest minds amongst us? And we may thank our divisions for this too. Yet our Brethren that have divided us, have still declared themselves to be no less enemies unto Popery than unto Prophaneness. But see how they have been over-wrought, and to what a pass we are all brought, who do but want the power of the Papists to unite us in Religion, and to reduce us unto better manners, and to more obedience unto Governments! Oh sad disease, that needeth such a remedy! from such a sad and fearful revolution, Good Lord deliver us.

2. A second loss is that of Intercession: when the men of *Nineveh* joyn'd unanimously in one request, God Almighty favour'd them with an eminent return of mercy; yet they were aliens from the Covenant of promise. But did ever the Children of *Isratl* cry unto the Lord, and he did not hear them? Did they ever murmur and he did not plague them? What should I say, as a mortal man, about the unsearchable judgments of Almighty God? If we agree in any one desire,

as for peace and settlement, can we agree to come into any one place, or to take with us words to ask it at his bounteous hands? Can we ask it with any fervour, whilst we have reserves about the terms, whereupon we do desire it? or can we expect that he should answer cold, uncertain, and lukewarm Peritions? Is not this the cause that we are spiritually disarmed, even as the *Philistins* dealt by the *Israelites*, so that there is neither sword nor shield amongst us, whereby we may prevail with God for any blessing upon us, or our Posterity? That the Heavens are as brass, which our divided prayers cannot pierce? That such clouds of blackness are impendent over us? But if we pray to God for divers things, such indeed as are contrary and inconsistent with one another, what returns can we expect? Here is an Assembly, praying, down with this, down with that. There is another, praying, Not so Lord, but establish this, and restore that: only in this they may possibly agree: Any thing rather than that which is. Which side should God Almighty hear? or with which should he not be offended? Is not this the reason therefore of such a distracted State? Do not the same pray against the peace and settlement which they do pretend to desire? And hath not God (sometimes) answered their importunity, by giving their own requests, to their utter disappointments, that they might be convinced of their own vanity, in their intermeddling so much as they do with his Providences? And yet they will not learn to be wise unto sobriety: but still they seem never to pray with more spirit (such as it is) than when they pray against their Brethren.

3. The third and last loss which I shall mention, is also most invaluable; our charity is distracted and abated, which the poor do sadly feel: our civility is disturbed, so that men do not dare to become free in conversation, till they have sufficiently proved the company: our neighbourly love is abated, and instead of a friend, which one had before, it may be he hath an enemy, or but a faint-hearted kindness, or an hollow pretence of some good will, consisting rather in some good wishes that he were but such as his former friend would have him to be, that he might love him, whose love (at best) is not

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without

*Evertère domos
totas, optanti-
bus ipsis, Vis
faciles: noci-
tura toga noci-
tura penuriam
militia, Juven.
Sat. 10.*

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without its rigour. But I will also spare to dilate my self on this point, that (at least) on one side charity may remain the founder.

Reas. 3.

The last reason why the Church doth so earnestly desire the return of her scattered and divided Members, is the great benefit and content that she should find therein; which is,

1. The delight of love: The *Shulamite* was passionately beloved for her good parts and beauty, which the Daughters of *Jerusalem* do acknowledg when they say, *Return, return, ô Shulamite, that we may look upon thee*: and the *Shulamite* understands no other when she answereth, *What shall ye see in the Shulamite?* We acknowledge the like, and we will tell you (with your favour) what we would see in you. We would see, and be partakers of your knowledge, and of your gifts of understanding in the Scriptures: We would see your zeal for God, and for his Sabbaths, and for his Ordinances; We would see your charity towards your neighbour, whom you would not have seen heretofore to sin (at least to commit a sin unto death) but you would have aided, and admonished him, howsoever you think your selves to be excused (since) of being your Brothers keepers: We would see the strictness of your lives, and of those of your families: We would hear your Readings, Prayers, Instructions, Catechisings, and other good Conferences that were wont to be there, fit to edifie, and to minister grace unto the hearers: We would over-hear your private prayers and devotions in your Closets, where you were wont to strive with God for the pardon of your sins, and for the obtaining of his holy Spirit, to sanctifie you throughout in body, soul, and mind: We would see your first love again (if it be possible) and those *fruits*, which you then brought forth, *worthy of amendment of life*. This is the beauty, which the Church would now see in the return of the wandering *Shulamite*, whether it be as in the dayes of old; that if so, she might admire and cherish her.

2. The beauty of array, which hath much decayed since our Congregations have been diverted, our Families divided, our People scattered: We can no more see men coming with their whole Train to the House of God, as they were wont

to do : And that was a beauty in the Streets of our *Jerusalem* : We cannot see their order here, where their seats are void ; so that our Churches look like great Houses, that are specious to behold without, but being unfurnished within afford the colder comfort : We cannot hear their voices in his holy Temples, singing aloud, and praising God, making also melody in their hearts, so keeping time on earth with the Saints and Angels that are in heaven : Much less can we meet them, as we used to do, at the Lords Table, at that Feast of Feasts, the only Feast of Loves, that Feast of marrow, and of wine refined on the Lees. And when we remember these things (to use the Psalmists words) *we pour out our souls within us : for we had gone with the multitude, we went with them to the House of God with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holiday* : These are the daies that would return, *o Shulamite*, with thy return. Then if any unbeliever, or any other bearing evil will to *Zion*, should look into our Assemblies, he might be apt to be stricken, and to be driven to confess, that surely God were amongst us, or in the midst of us. But now if he look in here, what shall he see but a despicable emptiness ? and if he go there, a more contemptible multitude, for want of order, which is *the beauty of holiness* ?

Psalm. 42. 4.

3. Lastly, Would but our divided Members return again, as Brethren, unto the body of our Church, we should then come to have the strength of *two Armies* ; whereas we are now unstable and weak as water, and cannot excel ; we should then become strong and invincible, and might boldly write upon our banner, *Deus nobiscum, quis contra nos* ? God is with us, who can stand against us ? The gates of hell shall not prevail, neither policy, nor power, nor any weapon that is form'd against us. We should then renew our strength like the Eagle ; our youth should return to us, as in the day when we came up out of the land of *Egypt*, in the beginning of the Reformation : we should have strength within, and the blessings of peace with it : we should become a terror unto foreign Nations, which do now despise us, and mark us out for a prey, in the day of their power, and of our weakness. Have we forgotten our deliverances from the power of *Spain* and *Austria*,

Gen. 49. 4.

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and the *Pope of Rome*? our *Victories in Ireland*? our *Aids* that we were then enabled to afford to *Henry* (afterwards the Great) King of *France*? and to the (then) poor distressed *States of Holland*? Having at the same time a Superintendency over all the Councils in the Realm of *Scotland*, and an influence upon divers of our Neighbours, with such a firm peace at home, that we hardly read of any insurrection, worthy to be mentioned, in four and forty years and upwards: Nay, the benefits of that blessed reign of *Queen Elizabeth*, did extend to propagate a longer peace unto posterity, than ever *Albion* knew before. And if we have not yet forgot those flourishing dayes of our renown, let us now remember that they were the rewards of an unanimous Reformation: when the heart of the people rose as one man to establish the Protestant Religion, as one Religion in the midst of us. And oh! that any one could promise me such another spirit to arise in *England* in these dayes of ours, and under God, I might as boldly promise even greater things than these. But though there be but little hopes of this, and but just reason to expect and fear, that all our labour which is thus applyed is like to be in vain; yet it is our duty to desire and endeavour it. And with that I shall conclude.

Applica.

Return, return, ô Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon thee: You that have been offended with our Church, and have left us, that have sadned our hearts, and weakned our hands thus long, *return* at last to comfort us, that we may look upon you with delight, and that our hearts may be stayed for you, and our fears stinted. Are you nothing moved by the force of duty, considering that peace and love is the Legacy which our Lord hath bequeathed unto all his followers to the worlds end? and the *great bond of perfectness*, which his Apostles laboured to preserve entire, knowing that Unity and Charity cannot be divided? Doth it nothing move you to anticipate Christs intention, which is our Union, and to further Satans, which is our division? Are you nothing moved with the deluge of prophaneness, that carrieth such a multitude headlong into hell, whilst you dispute which is the way to save them, and agree not on it? Are you nothing moved with
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the growth of Popery, which is like to over-run all; and if it did, would make you glad to digest the hardest morsel about which you are now so nice? considering that there is no other way in probability to prevent this, but your return into the Tents that you have left. Are you nothing moved by the judgments which have followed upon our dissensions, and do still lye upon them as a just punishment? *O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased with us, thou hast made the land to tremble, thou hast broken it: O heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh: Thou hast sowed thy people hard things:* And nothing is more hard than this, that our hearts are hardned against the wayes of peace after all our wars and unspeakable calamities: Our blood hath been shed in vain. *Quintili Vare, redde legiones quas perdidisti:* O Church-divisions, restore again the blood that hath been spilt like water on the ground, never to be recovered: Return the spirits which we have lost. We have undone the Posterity which is to come: The children yet unborn are accursed in their Parents loins, by reason of our divisions, and the issues that are thence to be expected: for as long as there is such a temper that doth over-rule the *Genius* of the Nation, God, who is offended with our prayers and services must needs with-hold that good that should establish us; and though He should grant it, yet should we with-hold it from one another, and sooner rend and tear it into pieces, than to let the publick be the better for it. It can never be well with us till there be an healing, and till Reformation do begin (as was sometimes preached to the *Parliament*) at the House of God. *To your Tents* therefore, *To your Tents, O Israel;* not for war, but for peace; not to set up many Altars, but to compas about the Tabernacle: for *why shouldst thou be any longer as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?* O thou that hast turned thus aside, hast thou any light more than others? We are the darker for the want of it: Hast thou any good affections more than others? We are barren and unfruitful for the want of them. Hast thou any power to add unto the Ministry of the word? We are destitute thereof, while it seems to be spent upon such as do
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the least need it : Dost thou look upon us, as being yet not fit nor worthy of thy Communion ? Return and strengthen us with better members (if thou hast any such to add to us) and we shall be thereby the more enabled to amend what is amiss. Canst not thou serve God with so much purity and power amongst us, as in separate Assemblies ? Remember whence thou hadst that purity and power, and restore the benefit thereof to the same Church from which thou didst at first receive it : Remember that heretofore thou couldst be richly edified in the bosom of the same Church, and since thou hast left it, both the purity and the power (whereof thou speakest) according to our estimate, is much decayed and impaired : Nay, thou callest that the power of godliness, which we take to be another thing : Thou dost but make excuses, not only against thine own duty, but against an invaluable privilege, which is the *Unity of the Spirit* ; and if the Church cannot be compleat without Thee, much less canst I thou be made perfect without *the Body* ; either edified in the true faith, or love ; by which alone thou canst expect to come to that *peace of God which passeth all understanding, which should keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*. Wherefore let me end my own Exhortation with that of the same Apostle in another place : *Above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness ; And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which ye are also called in one Body, and be ye thankful.*

Phil. 4. 7.

Col. 3. 14, 15.

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